



THE WORKS OF JAMES
WHITCOMB RILEY ❁ ❁

VOL. XIII



“— an’ a bran’-new floor
In th’ old porch —”

THE POEMS AND PROSE
✿ ✿ SKETCHES OF ✿ ✿
JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

HIS PA'S ROMANCE

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S
SONS † NEW YORK † 1908

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TO
EDGAR WILSON NYE

*SUCH silence—after such glad merriment!
O prince of halest humor, wit and cheer,
Could you yet speak to us, I doubt not we
Should catch your voice, still blithely eloquent
Above all murmurings of sorrow here,
Calling your love back to us laughingly.*

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HIS PA'S ROMANCE

HIS PA'S ROMANCE

ALL 'at I ever want to be
Is ist to be a man like Pa
When he wuz young an' married Ma!
Uncle he telled us yisterdy
Ist all about it then—'cause they,
My Pa an' Ma, wuz bofe away
To 'tend P'tracted Meetin', where
My Pa an' Ma is allus there
When all the big "Revivals" is,
An' "Love-Feasts," too, an' "Class," an' "Prayer,"
An' when's "Comoonian Servicis."
An', yes, an' Uncle said to not
To never tell *them* ner let on
Like we knowed now ist how they got
First married. So—while they wuz gone—
Uncle he telled us ever'thing—
'Bout how my Pa wuz ist a pore
Farm-boy.—He says, I tell you *what*,

HIS PA'S ROMANCE

Your Pa *wuz* pore! But neighbours they
All liked him—all but one old man
An' his old wife that folks all say
Nobody liked, ner never can!
Yes, sir! an' Uncle purt'-nigh swore
About the mean old man an' way
He treat' my Pa!—'cause he's a pore
Farm-hand—but prouder 'an a king—
An' ist work' on, he did, an' wore
His old patched clo'es, ist anyway,
So he saved up his wages—then
He ist worked on an' saved some more,
An' ist worked on, ist night an' day—
Till, sir, he save' up nine er ten
Er hunnerd dollars! But he keep
All still about it, Uncle say—
But he ist thinks—an' thinks a heap!
Though what he wuz a-thinkin', Pa
He never tell' a soul but Ma—
(Then, course, you know, he wuzn't Pa,
An', course, you know, she wuzn't Ma—
They wuz ist sweethearts, course you know);
'Cause Ma wuz ist a girl, about
Sixteen; an' when my Pa he go
A-courtin' her, her Pa an' Ma—

HIS PA'S ROMANCE

The very first they find it out—
Wuz maddest folks you ever saw!
'Cause it wuz her old Ma an' Pa
'At hate' my Pa, an' toss their head,
An' ist raise Ned! An' her Pa said
He'd ruther see his daughter dead!
An' said she's ist a child!—an' so
Wuz Pa!—An' ef he wuz man-grown
An' only man on earth below,
His daughter shouldn't marry him
Ef he's a king an' on his throne!
Pa's chances then looked mighty slim
Fer certain, Uncle said. But he—
He never told a soul but her
What he wuz keepin' quiet fer.
Her folks ist lived a mile from where
He lived at—an' they drove past there
To git to town. An' ever' one
An' all the neighbors they liked her
An' showed it! But her folks—no, sir!—
Nobody liked her parents none!
An' so when they shet down, you know,
On Pa—an' old man tell' him so—
Pa ist went back to work, an' she
Ist waited. An', sir! purty soon

HIS PA'S ROMANCE

Her folks they thought he's turned his eye
Some other way—'cause by-an'-by
They heard he'd *rented* the old place
He worked on. An' one afternoon
A neighbor, that had bust' a trace,
He tell' the old man they wuz signs
Around the old place that the young
Man wuz a-fixin' up the old
Log cabin some, an' he had brung
New furnichur from town; an' told
How th' old house 'uz whitewashed clean
An' sweet—wiv morning-glory vines
An' hollyhawks all 'round the door
An' winders—an' a bran'-new floor
In th' old porch—an' wite-new green-
An'-red pump in the old sweep-well!
An', Uncle said, when he hear tell
O' all them things, the old man he
Ist grin' an' says, he "reckon' now
Some gal, er widder anyhow,
That silly boy he's coaxed at last
To marry him!" he says, says-ee,
"An' ef he has, 'so mote it be'!"
Then went back to the house to tell
His *wife* the news, as he went past

HIS PA'S ROMANCE

The smokehouse, an' then went on in
The kitchen, where his daughter she
Wuz washin', to tell *her*, an' grin
An' try to worry her a spell!
The mean old thing! But Uncle said
She ain't cry much—ist pull her old
Sunbonnet forrerds on her head—
So's old man he can't see her face
At all! An' when he s'pose he scold
An' jaw enough, he ist clear' out
An' think he's boss of all the place!

Then Uncle say, the first you know
They's go' to be a Circus-show
In town; an' old man think he'll take
His wife an' go. An' when she say
To take their daughter, too, *she* shake
Her head like she don't *want* to go;
An' when he sees she wants to stay,
The old man takes her, anyway!
An' so she went! But Uncle he
Said she looked mighty sweet that day,
Though she wuz pale as she could be,
A-speshully a-drivin' by
Wite where her beau lived at, you know;

HIS PA'S ROMANCE

But out the corner of his eye
The old man watch' her; but she throw
Her pairsol 'round so she can't see
The house at all! An' then she hear
Her Pa an' Ma a-talkin' low
An' kindo' laughin'-like; but she
Ist set there in the seat behind,
P'tendin' like she didn't mind.
An', Uncle say, when they got past
The young man's place, an' 'pearantly
He wuzn't home, but off an' gone
To town, the old man turned at last
An' talked back to his daughter there,
All pleasant-like, from then clean on
Till they got into town, an' where
The Circus wuz, an' on inside
O' that, an' through the crowd, on to
The very top seat in the tent
Wite next the band—a-bangin' through
A tune 'at bust his yeers in two!
An' there the old man scrouged an' tried
To make his wife set down, an' she
A-yellin'! But ist what she meant
He couldn't hear, ner couldn't see
Till she turned 'round an' pinte. Then

HIS PA'S ROMANCE

He turned an' looked—an' looked again! . . .
He ist saw neighbors ever'where—
But, sir, *his daughter* wuzn't there!
An', Uncle says, he even saw
Her beau, you know, he hated so;
An' he wuz with some other girl.
An' then he heard the Clown "Haw-haw!"
An' saw the horses wheel an' whirl
Around the ring, an' heard the zipp
O' the Ringmaster's long slim whip—
But that whole Circus, Uncle said,
Wuz all inside the old man's head!

An' Uncle said, he didn't find
His daughter all that afternoon—
An' her Ma says she'll lose her mind
Ef they don't find her purty soon!
But, though they looked all day, an' stayed
There fer the night p'formance—not
No use at all!—they never laid
Their eyes on her. An' then they got
Their team out, an' the old man shook
His fist at all the town, an' then
Shook it up at the moon ag'in,
An' said his time 'ud come, some day!
An' jerked the lines an' driv away.

HIS PA'S ROMANCE

Uncle, he said, he 'spect, that night,
The old man's madder yet when they
Drive past the young man's place, an' hear
A fiddle there, an' see a light
Inside, an' shadders light an' gay
A-dancin' 'crosst the winder-blinds.
An' some young chaps outside yelled, "Say!
What 'pears to be the hurry—hey?"
But the old man ist whipped the lines
An' streaked past like a runaway!

An' now you'll be su'prised, I bet!—
I hardly ain't quit laughin' yet
When Uncle say, that jamboree
An' dance an' all—w'y, that's a sign
That any old man ort to see,
As plain as 8 and 1 makes 9,
That they's a *weddin'* wite inside
That very house he's whippin' so
To git apast!—An', sir! the bride
There's his own daughter! Yes, an' oh!
She's my Ma now—an' young man she
Got married, he's my Pa! *Whoop-ee!*
But Uncle say to not laugh all
The laughin' yet, but please save some
To kindo' spice up what's to come!

HIS PA'S ROMANCE

Then Uncle say, about next day
The neighbors they begin to call
An' wish 'em well, an' say how glad
An' proud an' tickled ever' way
Their friends all is—an' how they had
The lovin' prayers of ever' one
That had homes of their own! But none
Said nothin' 'bout the home that she
Had run away from! So she sighed
Sometimes—an' wunst she purt-'nigh cried.

Well, Uncle say, her old Pa, he
Ist like to died, he wuz so mad!
An' her Ma, too! But by-an'-by
They cool down some.

An', 'bout a week,
She want to see her Ma so bad,
She think she'll haf to go! An' so
She coax him; an' he kiss her cheek
An' say, Lord bless her, *course* they'll go!
An', Uncle say, when they're bofe come
A-knockin' there at her old home—
W'y, first he know, the door it flew
Open, all quick, an' she's jerked in,

HIS PA'S ROMANCE

An', quicker still, the door's banged to
An' locked: an' crosst the winder-sill
The old man pokes a shotgun through
An' says to git! "You stold my child,"
He says; "an', now she's back, w'y, you
Clear out, this minute, er I'll kill
You! Yes, an' I 'ull kill her, too,
Ef you don't go!" An' then, all wild,
His young wife begs him please to go!
An' so he turn' an' walk'—all slow
An' pale as death, but awful still
An' ca'm—back to the gate, an' on
Into the road, where he had gone
So many times alone, you know!
An', Uncle say, a whipperwill
Holler so lonesome, as he go
On back to'rds home, he say he 'spec'
He ist 'ud like to wring its neck!
An' I ain't think he's goin' back
All by hisse'f—but Uncle say
That's what he does, an' it's a fac'!

An' 'pears-like he's gone back to *stay*—
'Cause there he stick', ist thataway,
An' don't go nowheres any more,

HIS PA'S ROMANCE

Ner don't nobody ever see
Him set his foot outside the door—
Till 'bout five days, a boy loped down
The road, a-comin' past from town,
An' he called to him from the gate,
An' sent the old man word: He's thought
Things over now; an', while he hate
To lose his wife, he think she ought
To mind her Pa an' Ma an' do
Whatever *they* advise her to.
An' sends word, too, to come an' git
Her new things an' the furnichur
That he had special' bought fer her—
'Cause, now that they wuz goin' to quit,
She's free to ist have all of it;—
So, fer his love fer her, he say
To come an' git it, wite away.
An' *spang!* that very afternoon,
Here come her Ma—ist 'bout as soon
As old man could hitch up an' tell
Her "hurry back!" An' 'bout as quick
As she's drove there to where my Pa—
I mean to where her son-in-law—
Lives at, he meets her at the door
All smilin', though he's awful pale

HIS PA'S ROMANCE

An' trimbly—like he's ist been sick;
He take her in the house—An', 'fore
She knows it, they's a cellar-door
Shet on her, an' she hears the click
Of a' old rusty padlock! Then,
Uncle, he say, she kindo' stands
An' thinks—an' thinks—an' thinks ag'in—
An' mayby thinks of her own child
Locked up—like her! An' Uncle smiled,
An' I ist laughed an' clapped my hands!
An' there she stayed! An' she can cry
Ist all she want! an' yell an' kick
To ist her heart's content! an' try
To pry out wiv a quiltin'-stick!
But Uncle say he guess at last
She 'bout give up, an' holler' through
The door-crack fer to please to be
So kind an' good as send an' tell
The old man, like she want him to,
To come, 'fore night, an' set her free,
Er—they wuz rats down there! An' yell
She did, till, Uncle say, it soured
The morning's milk in the back yard!
But all the answer reached her, where
She's skeered so in the dark down there,

HIS PA'S ROMANCE

Wuz ist a mutterin' that she heard,—
“*I've sent him word!—I've sent him word!*”
An' shore enough, as Uncle say,
He *has* “sent word!”

Well, it's plum night
An' all the house is shet up tight—
Only one winder 'bout half-way
Raised up, you know; an' ain't no light
Inside the whole house, Uncle say.
Then, first you know, there where the team
Stands hitched yet, there the old man stands—
A' old tin lantern in his hands
An' monkey-wrench; an' he don't seem
To make things out, a-standin' there.
He comes on to the gate an' feels
An' fumbles fer the latch—then hears
A voice that chills him to the heels—
“You halt! an' stand right where you air!”
Then, sir! my—my—his son-in-law,
There at the winder wiv his gun,
He tell the old man what he's done:
“You hold *my* wife a prisoner—
An' *your* wife, drat ye! I've got *her*!
An' now, sir,” Uncle say he say,

HIS PA'S ROMANCE

“You ist turn round an’ climb wite in
That wagon, an’ drive home ag’in
An’ bring my wife back wite away,
An’ we’ll trade then—an’ not before
Will I unlock my cellar-door—
Not fer your wife’s sake ner your own,
But *my* wife’s sake—an’ her’s alone!”
An’, Uncle say, it don’t sound like
It’s so, but yet it is!—He say,
From wite then, somepin seem’ to strike
The old man’s funny-bone some way;
An’, minute more, that team o’ his
Went tearin’ down the road *k’whiz!*
An’ in the same two-forty style
Come whizzin’ back! An’ oh, that-air
Sweet girl a-cryin’ all the while,
Thinkin’ about her Ma there, shet
In her own daughter’s cellar, where—
Ist week or so *she’s* kep’ house there—
She hadn’t time to clean it yet!
So when her Pa an’ her they git
There—an’ the young man grab’ an’ kiss
An’ hug her, till she make him quit
An’ ask him where her mother is.
An’ then he smile’ an’ try to not;

HIS PA'S ROMANCE

Then slow-like find th' old padlock key,
An' blow a' oat-hull out of it,
An' then stoop down there where he's got
Her Ma locked up so keerfully—
An' where, wite there, he say he thought
It *ort* to been *the old man*—though
Uncle, he say, he reckon not—
When out she bounced, all tickled so
To taste fresh air ag'in an' find
Her folks wunst more, an' grab' her child
An' cry an' laugh, an' even go
An' hug the old man; an' he wind
Her in his arms, an' laugh, an' pat
Her back, an' say he's riconciled,
In such a happy scene as that,
To swop his daughter for her Ma,
An' have so smart a son-in-law
As *they* had! “Yes, an' he's my Pa!”
I laugh' an' yell', “Hooray-hooraw!”

SONG DISCORDANT

I WANT to say it, and I will:—

You are as sour as you are sweet,
And sweeter than the daffodil

That blossoms at your feet.—

You are as plain as you are fair;

And though I hate, I love you still,
And so—*confound* you, darling! *There!*—

I want to say it, and I will!

I want to ask it, and I do

Demand of you a perfect trust,—
But love me as I want you to—

You must, you minx!—you must!
You blight and bless me, till I swear

And pray—chaotic even as you.—
I curse—Nay, dear,—I *kiss* you. *There!*—

I want to, and I do!

A LOST LOVE

'TWAS a summer ago when he left me here—
A summer of smiles, with never a tear
Till I said to him, with a sob, my dear,—
 Good-by, my lover; good-by!

For I loved him, O as the stars love night!
And my cheeks for him flashed red and white
When first he called me his Heart's delight,—
 Good-by, my lover; good-by!

The touch of his hand was a thing divine
As he sat with me in the soft moonshine
And drank of my love as men drink wine,—
 Good-by, my lover; good-by!

And never a night as I knelt in prayer,
In thought as white as our own souls were,
But in fancy he came and he kissed me there,—
 Good-by, my lover; good-by!

A LOST LOVE

But now—ah, *now!* what an empty place
My whole heart is!—Of the old embrace
And the kiss I loved there lives no trace—
Good-by, my lover; good-by!

He sailed not over the stormy sea,
And he went not down in the waves—not he—
But O, he is lost—for he married me—
Good-by, my lover; good-by!

ALMOST BEYOND ENDURANCE

I AIN'T a-goin' to cry no more, no more!
I'm got ear-ache, an' Ma can't make
It quit a-tall;
An' Carlo bite my rubber-ball
An' puncture it; an' Sis she take
An' poke' my knife down through the stable-floor
An' loozed it—blame it all!
But I ain't goin' to cry no more, no more!

An' Aunt Mame *wrote* she's comin', an' she *can't*—
Folks is come *there!*—An' I don't care
She *is* my Aunt!
An' my eyes stings; an' I'm
Ist coughin' all the time,
An' hurts me so; an' where my side's so sore
Grampa felt where, an' he
Says "Mayby it's *pleurasy!*"
But I ain't goin' to cry no more, no more!

ALMOST BEYOND ENDURANCE

An' I clumbed up an' nen falled off the fence,
An' Herbert he ist laugh at me!
An' my fi'-cents
It sticked in my tin bank, an' I ist tore
Purt'-nigh my thumbnail off, a-tryin' to git
It out—nen *smash* it!—An' it's in there yit!
But I ain't goin' to cry no more, no more!

Oo! I'm so wickud!—An' my breath's so *hot*—
Ist like I run an' don't res' none
But ist run on when I ought to not;
Yes, an' my chin
An' lips 's all warpy, an' teeth's so fast,
An' 's a place in my throat I can't swaller past—
An' they all hurt so!—
An' oh, my-oh!
I'm a-startin' ag'in—
I'm a-startin' ag'in, but I *won't*, fer shore!—
I ist ain't goin' to cry no more, no more!

A SIMPLE RECIPE

To be a wholly worthy man,
As you, my boy, would like to be,—
This is to show you how you can—
This simple recipe:—

Be honest—both in word and act,
Be strictly truthful through and through:
Fact cannot fail.—You stick to fact,
And fact will stick to you.

Be clean—outside and in, and sweep
Both hearth and heart and hold them bright;
Wear snowy linen—aye, and keep
Your *conscience* snowy-white.

Do right, your utmost—good *must* come
To you who do your level-best—
Your very hopes will help you some,
And work will do the rest.

THE TOY-BALLOON

THEY wuz a Big Day wunst in town,
An' little Jason's Pa
Buyed him a little toy-balloon,
The first he ever saw.—
An' oh! but Jase wuz *more'n* proud,
A-holdin' to the string
An' scrougin' through the grea'-big crowd,
To hear the Glee Club sing.

The Glee Club it wuz goin' to sing
In old Masonic Hall;
An' Speakin', it wuz in there, too,
An' soldiers, folks an' all:
An' Jason's Pa he git a seat
An' set down purty soon,
A-holdin' little Jase, an' him
A-holdin' his balloon.

THE TOY-BALLOON

An' while the Speakin's startin' up

An' ever'body still—

The first you know wuz little Jase

A-yellin' fit to kill!—

Nen Jason's Pa jump on his seat

An' grab up in the air,—

But little Jason's toy-balloon

Wuz clean away from there!

An' Jase he yelled; an' Jase's Pa,

Still lookin' up, clumb down—

While that-air little toy-balloon

Went bumpin' roun' an' roun'

Ag'inst the ceilin', 'way up there

Where ever'body saw,

An' *they* all yelled, an' *Jason* yelled,

An' little Jason's Pa!

But when his Pa he packed him out

A-screamin'—nen the crowd

Looked down an' hushed—till they looked up

An' howled ag'in out loud;

An' nen the speaker, mad an' pale,

Jist turned an' left the stand,

An' all j'ined in the Glee Club—"Hail,

Columby, Happy Land!"

HER LONESOMENESS

WHEN little Elizabeth whispers
Her morning-love to me,
Each word of the little lisper's,
As she clambers on my knee—
Hugs me and whispers, "Mommy,
Oh, I'm so glad it's day
And the night 's all gone away!"
How it does thrill and awe me,—
"The night 's all gone away!"

"Sometimes I wake, all listenin',"
She sighs, "and all 's so still!—
The moon and the stars half-glistenin'
Over the window-sill:—
And I look where the gas's pale light
Is all turned down in the hall—
And you ain't here at all!—
And oh, how I wish it was daylight!
—And you ain't here at all!"

HER LONESOMENESS

“And oh,” she goes eerily whining
And laughing, too, as she speaks,
“If only the sun kept shining
For weeks and weeks and weeks!—
For the world’s so dark, without you,
And the moon ’s turned down so low—
’Way in the night, you know,—
And I get so lonesome about you!—
’Way in the night, you know!”

WITH A CHILD-BOOK

TO MASTER PRESTON FROM HIS LONG-INVISIBLE PLAYMATE

THERE is LORE of more devices,
And ROMANCE that more entices
Higher minds and higher prices;—
But, for “Giggle-boy” or “Cry-sis”
(With some snifless interstices)
Here’s a little tale suffices—
Sweet as oranges in slices
Slobbered in slues o’ cream and ices,
Tanged with tingling, spangling spices.—
Ho! there’s *no* tale half so nice as
This Old Tailor and his Mice is!

BILLY MILLER'S CIRCUS-SHOW

AT Billy Miller's Circus-Show—

In their old stable where it 's at—
The boys pays twenty pins to go,
An' gits their money's-worth at that!—
'Cause Billy he can climb and chalk
His stockin'-feet an' purt'-nigh walk
A tight-rope—yes, an' *ef* he fall
He'll ketch, an' "skin a cat"—'at's all!

He ain't afeard to swing and hang
Ist by his legs!—an' mayby stop
An' yell "Look out!" an' nen—k-spang!—
He'll let loose, upside-down, an' drop
Wite on his hands! An' nen he'll do
"Contortion-acts"—ist limber through
As "Injarubber Mens" 'at goes
With shore-fer-certain circus-shows!

BILLY MILLER'S CIRCUS-SHOW

At Billy Miller's Circus-Show

He's got a circus-ring—an' they's

A dressin'-room,—so's he can go

An' dress an' paint up when he plays

He's somepin' else;—'cause sometimes he's

"Ringmaster"—bossin' like he please—

An' sometimes "Ephalunt"—er "Bare-

Back Rider," prancin' out o' there!

An' sometimes—an' the best of all!—

He's "The Old Clown," an' got on clo'es

All stripud,—an' white hat, all tall

An' peakud—like in shore-'nuff shows,—

An' got three-cornered red-marks, too,

On his white cheeks—ist like they do!—

An' you'd ist die, the way he sings

An' dances an' says funny things!

THE LAW OF THE PERVERSE

WHERE did the custom come from, anyway?—

Sending the boys to “play,” at dinner-time,
When we have company? What is there, pray,

About the starched, unmalleable *guest*

That, in the host’s most genial interest,
Finds *him* first favour on Thanksgiving Day

Beside the steaming turkey, with its wings

Akimbo over all the savoury things

It has been stuffed with, yet may never thus
Make one poor boy’s face glad and glorious!

Fancy the exiled boy in the back-yard,

Ahungered so, that any kind of grub

Were welcome, yet with face set stern and hard,

Hearing the feasters’ mirth and mild hubbub,

And wanting to kill something with a club!—

Intuitively arguing the unjust

Distinction, as he naturally must,—

THE LAW OF THE PERVERSE

The guest with all the opportunity—
The boy with all the appetite! Ah, me!

So is it that, when I, a luckless guest,
Am thus arraigned at banquet, I sit grim
And sullen, eating nothing with a zest,—
With smirking features, yet a soul distressed,
Missing the banished boy and envying him—
Aye, longing for a spatter on my vest
From his deflecting spoon, and yearning for
The wild swoop of his lips insatiate, or
His ever-ravenous, marauding eye
Fore-eating everything, from soup to pie!

A SONG O' CHEER

MY Grampa he's a-allus sayin',
 "Sing a song o' cheer!"—
And wunst I says "What kind *is* them?"
 He says,—"*The kind to hear.*—
'Cause they're the songs that *Nature* sings,
 In ever' bird that twitters!"
"Well, *whipperwills* and *doves*," says I,
 "Hain't over-cheery critters!"
"Then don't you sing like *them*," he says—
 "Ner *guinny-hens*, my dear—
Ner *peafowls* nuther (drat the boy!)
 You sing a song o' cheer!"
I can't sing nothin' anyhow;
 But, comin' home, to'rds night,
I kindo'-sorto' kep' a-whistlin'
 "Old—Bob—White!"

THE OLD MAN OF THE SEA

I'M The Old Man of the Sea—I am!—
And this is my secret pride,
That I have a hundred shapes, all sham,
And a hundred names beside:
They have named me “Habit,” and “Way,” forsooth,
“Capricious,” and “Fancy-free”;—
But to you, O Youth, I confess the truth,—
I'm The Old Man of the Sea.

*I'm The Old Man of the Sea, yo-ho !
So lift up a song with me,
As I sit on the throne of your shoulders, alone,
I'm The Old Man of the Sea.*

Crowned with the crown of your noblest thought,
I'm The Old Man of the Sea:
I reign, rule, ruin, and palter not
In my pitiless tyranny:

THE OLD MAN OF THE SEA

You, my lad, are my gay Sindbad,
Frisking about, with me
High on the perch I have always had—
I'm The Old Man of the Sea.

*I'm The Old Man of the Sea, yo-ho !
So lift up a song with me,
As I sit on the throne of your shoulders, alone,
I'm The Old Man of the Sea.*

Tricked in the guise of your best intent,
I am your failures—all—
I am the victories you invent,
And your high resolves that fall:
I am the vow you are breaking now
As the wassail-bowl swings free
And the red guilt flushes your cheek and brow—
I'm The Old Man of the Sea.

*I'm The Old Man of the Sea, yo-ho !
So lift up a song with me,
As I sit on the throne of your shoulders, alone,
I'm The Old Man of the Sea.*

I am your false dreams of success
And your mythical future fame—

THE OLD MAN OF THE SEA

Your life-long lies, and your soul's distress
And your slowly-dying shame:
I'm the chattering half of your latest laugh,
And your tongue's last perfidy—
Your doom, your tomb, and your epitaph . . .
I'm The Old Man of the Sea.

*I'm The Old Man of the Sea, yo-ho !
So lift up a song with me,
As I sit on the throne of your shoulders, alone,
I'm The Old Man of the Sea.*

AT NINETY IN THE SHADE

HOT weather? Yes; but really not,
Compared with weather twice as hot.
Find comfort, then, in arguing thus,
And you'll pull through victorious!—
For instance, while you gasp and pant
And try to cool yourself—and can't—
With soda, cream and lemonade,
The heat at ninety in the shade,—
Just calmly sit and ponder o'er
These same degrees, with ninety more
On top of them, and so concede
The weather now is cool indeed!
Think—as the perspiration dew
Your fevered brow, and seems to ooze
From out the ends of every hair—
Whole floods of it, with floods to spare—
Think, I repeat, the while the sweat
Pours down your spine—how hotter yet

AT NINETY IN THE SHADE

Just ninety *more* degrees would be,
And bear *this* ninety patiently!
Think—as you mop your brow and hair,
With sticky feelings everywhere—
How ninety more degrees increase
Of heat like this would start the grease;
Or, think, as you exhausted stand,
A wilted “palmleaf” in each hand—
When the thermometer has done
With ease the lap of ninety-one;
O think, I say, what heat might do
At one hundred and eighty-two—
Just twice the heat you now declare,
Complainingly, is hard to bear.
Or, as you watch the mercury
Mount, still elate, one more degree,
And doff your collar and cravat,
And rig a sponge up in your hat,
And ask Tom, Harry, Dick or Jim
If this is hot enough for him—
Consider how the sun would pour
At one hundred and eighty-four—
Just twice the heat that seems to be
Affecting you unpleasantly,
The very hour that you might find

AT NINETY IN THE SHADE

As cool as dew, were you inclined.
But why proceed when none will heed
Advice apportioned to the need?
Hot weather? Yes; but really not,
Compared with weather twice as hot!

GOOD-BY ER HOWDY-DO

SAY good-by er howdy-do—
What's the odds betwixt the two?
Comin'—goin'—ev'ry day—
Best friends first to go away—
Grasp of hands you'd rather hold
Than their weight in solid gold
Slips their grip while greetin' you.—
Say good-by er howdy-do!

Howdy-do, and then, good-by—
Mixes jist like laugh and cry;
Deaths and births, and worst and best,
Tangled their contrariest;
Ev'ry jinglin' weddin'-bell
Skeerin' up some funer'l knell.—
Here's my song, and there's your sigh.—
Howdy-do, and then, good-by!

GOOD-BY ER HOWDY-DO

Say good-by er howdy-do—
Jist the same to me and you;
'Taint worth while to make no fuss,
'Cause the job's put up on us!
Some One's runnin' this concern
That's got nothin' else to learn:
Ef *He's* willin', we'll pull through—
Say good-by er howdy-do!

A LOCAL POLITICIAN FROM AWAY BACK

JEDGE is good at argyin'—
No mistake in that!
Most folks 'at tackles *him*
He'll skin 'em like a cat!
You see, the Jedge is read up,
And ben in politics,
Hand-in-glove, you might say,
Sense back in '56.

Elected to the Shurrif, first,
Then elected Clerk;
Went into lawin' then,
And buckled down to work;
Practised three or four terms,
Then he run for jedge—
Speechified a little 'round,
And went in like a wedge!

A LOCAL POLITICIAN FROM AWAY BACK

Run fer Legislatur' twic't—
Made her, ever' pop!
Keeps on the way he's doin',
Don't know where he'll stop!
Some thinks he's got his eye
On the govnership;—
Well, ef he tuk the track,
Guess he'd make the trip.

But I started out to tell ye—
(Now I allus liked *the man*—
Not fer his politics,
But *social'*, understan'!—
Fer, 's regards to *my* views,
Political and sich,—
When we come together there
We're purty ap' to hitch.)

Ketched him in at Knox's shop
On'y t'other day—
Gittin' shaved, the Jedge was,
Er somepin' thataway.—
Well, I tetched him up some
On the silver bill:—
Jedge says, "I won't discuss it;"
I says, "*You will!*"

A LOCAL POLITICIAN FROM AWAY BACK

I-says-ee, "I reckon
You'll concede with me,
Coin's the on'y genuine
Money," I-says-ee;
Says I, "What's a dollar-bill?"
Says I, "What's a ten—
Er forty-leven hunderd of 'em?—
Give us *specie*, then!"

I seed I was a gittin'
The Jedge kindo' red
Around the gills. He hawked some
And cle'ed his throat and said—
"Facts is too complicated
'Bout the bill in view,"
Squirmed and told the barber then
He wisht he'd hurry through.

'Ll, then, I knowed I had him,—
And the crowd around the fire
Was all a-winkin' at me,
As the barber raised him higher—
Says I, "Jedge, what's a dollar?—
Er a half-un," I-says-ee—
"What's a *quarter*?—What's a *dime*?"
"What's *cents*?" says he.

A LOCAL POLITICIAN FROM AWAY BACK

W'y, I had him fairly b'ilin'!
"You needn't comb my hair,"
He says to the barber—
"I want fresh air;"
And you'd a-died a-laughin'
To a-seed him grab his hat,
As I-says-ee, says I, "Jedge,
Where you goin' at!"

Jedge is good at argyin',
By-and-large; and yit
Beat him at his own game
And he's goin' to git!
And yit the Jedge is read up,
And ben in politics,
Hand-in-glove, you might say,
Sence back in '56.

LARRY NOOLAN'S NEW YEAR

BE-GORRIE, aI wor sorry
When the Ould Year died:
An' aI says, "aI'll shtart to-morry,
Like aI've always thried—
aI'll give yez all fair warnin'
aI'll be shtartin' in the mornin'
From the wakeness aI was born in—
When the Ould Year died."

The year forninsht the pasht wan,
When the Ould Year died,
Says aI, "This is the lasht wan
aI'll be filled—wid pride."
So says aI til Miss McCarty
aI wor meetin' at the party,
"Lave us both be drinkin' hearty!"
When the Ould Year died.

LARRY NOOLAN'S NEW YEAR

So we dined an' wined together,
When the Ould Year died,
An' agreed on health an' weather,
An' the whule wurld wide,
An' says aI,—“aI'm thinkin' very
Much it's you aI'd like to marry:”
“Then,” says she, “Why don't you, Larry?”
When the Ould Year died.

“A BRAVE REFRAIN”

WHEN snow is here, and the trees look weird,
And the knuckled twigs are gloved with frost;
When the breath congeals in the drover's beard,
And the old pathway to the barn is lost;
When the rooster's crow is sad to hear,
And the stamp of the stabled horse is vain,
And the tone of the cow-bell grieves the ear—
O then is the time for a brave refrain!

When the gears hang stiff on the harness-peg,
And the tallow gleams in frozen streaks;
And the old hen stands on a lonesome leg,
And the pump sounds hoarse and the handle squeaks;
When the woodpile lies in a shrouded heap,
And the frost is scratched from the window-pane
And anxious eyes from the inside peep—
O then is the time for a brave refrain!

“ A BRAVE REFRAIN ”

When the ax-helve warms at the chimney-jamb,
And hob-nailed shoes on the hearth below,
And the house-cat curls in a slumber calm,
And the eight-day clock ticks loud and slow;
When the harsh broom-handle jabs the ceil
’Neath the kitchen-loft, and the drowsy brain
Sniffs the breath of the morning meal—
O then is the time for a brave refrain!

ENVOI

When the skillet seethes, and a blubbering hot
Tilts the lid of the coffee-pot,
And the scent of the buckwheat cake grows plain—
O then is the time for a brave refrain!

I SMOKE MY PIPE

I CAN'T extend to every friend
In need a helping hand—
No matter though I wish it so,
'Tis not as Fortune planned;
But haply may I fancy they
Are men of different stripe
Than others think who hint and wink,—
And so—I smoke my pipe!

A golden coal to crown the bowl—
My pipe and I alone,—
I sit and muse with idler views
Perchance than I should own:—
It might be worse to own the purse
Whose gluttoned bowels gripe
In little qualms of stinted alms;
And so I smoke my pipe.

I SMOKE MY PIPE

And if inclined to moor my mind
And cast the anchor Hope,
A puff of breath will put to death
The morbid misanthrope
That lurks inside—as errors hide
In standing forms of type
To mar at birth some line of worth;
And so I smoke my pipe.

The subtle stings misfortune flings
Can give me little pain
When my narcotic spell has wrought
This quiet in my brain:
When I can waste the past in taste
So luscious and so ripe
That like an elf I hug myself;
And so I smoke my pipe.

And wrapped in shrouds of drifting clouds
I watch the phantom's flight,
Till alien eyes from Paradise
Smile on me as I write:
And I forgive the wrongs that live,
As lightly as I wipe
Away the tear that rises here;
And so I smoke my pipe.

KATHLEEN MAVOURNEEN

1894

Frederick Nicholls Crouch, the Musical Genius and Composer of the world-known air "Kathleen Mavourneen," was, at above date, living, in helpless age, in his adopted Country, America—a citizen since 1849.

KATHLEEN MAVOURNEEN! The song is still ringing
As fresh and as clear as the trill of the birds;
In world-weary hearts it is throbbing and singing
In pathos too sweet for the tenderest words.
Oh, have we forgotten the one who first breathed it?
Oh, have we forgotten his rapturous art—
Our meed to the master whose genius bequeathed it?
Oh, why art thou silent, thou Voice of the Heart?—
Our meed to the master whose genius bequeathed it—
Oh, why are we silent, Kathleen Mavourneen!

Kathleen Mavourneen! Thy lover still lingers;
The long night is waning, the stars pale and few;

KATHLEEN MAVOURNEEN

Thy sad serenader, with tremulous fingers,
Is bowed with his tears as the lily with dew;
The old harpstrings quaver, the old voice is shaking;
In sighs and in sobs moans the yearning refrain;
The old vision dims, and the old heart is breaking . . .
Kathleen Mavourneen, inspire us again!
The old vision dims, and the old heart is breaking:
Oh, why are we silent, Kathleen Mavourneen!

LISPING IN NUMBERS

WE' got a' Uncle writes poetry-rhymes
Fer me an' Eddie to *speak*, sometimes,—
'Cause *he's* a *poet*—an' he gits *paid*
Fer poetry-writin',—'cause that's his *trade*.
An' Eddie says he's goin' to try
To be a poet, too, by an' by
When he's a man!—An' I 'spect he is,
'Cause on his slate wunst he print' this
An' call it

"THE SQUIRL AND THE FUNY LITEL GIRL"

*"A litel girl
Whose name wuz Perl
Went to the woods to play.
The day wuz brite,
An' her hart wuz lite
As she galy skiped a way.*

LISPING IN NUMBERS

*"A queer litel chatter,
A soft litel patter,
She herd in the top of a tree:
The suprizd litel Perl
Saw a qute litel squirl,
As cuning as cuning cud be.*

*"She twisted her curl,
As she looked at the squirl,
An' playfully told it 'good day!'
She calld it 'Bunny'—
Wuzent that funy?
An' it noded an' bounded a way."*

Ma read it, an' says "she's *awful proud*,"—
An' Pa says "Splendid!" an' laugh' out loud;
But Uncle says, "You can talk as you please,
It's a purty good little poetry-piece!"

HE COMETH IN SWEET SENSE

HE cometh in sweet sense to thee,
Be it or dawn, or noon, or night,—
No deepest pain, nor hallest glee,
But He discerneth it aright.

If there be tears bedim thine eyes,
His sympathy thou findest plain,—
The darkest midnight of the skies
He weepeth with the tears of rain.

If thou art joyful, He hath had
His gracious will, and lo, 'tis well,—
As thou art glad, so He is glad,
Nor mercy strained one syllable.

Wild vows are words, as prayers are words.—
God's mercy is not measured by
Our poor deservings: He affords
To listen, if we laugh or cry.

MR. SILBERBERG

AND LITTLE JULIUS

I LIKE me yet dot leedle chile
Vich climb my lap up in to-day,
Unt took my cheap cigair away,
Unt laugh unt kiss me, purty-whvile,—
Possescially I like dose mout'
Vich taste his moder's like—unt so,
Eef my cigair it gone glean out
—Yust let it go!

Vat I caire den for *anyding*?
Der "HERALDT" schlip out fon my handt
Unt all my odvairtizement standt
Mitout new changements boddering;
I only t'ink—I haf me dis
One leedle boy to pet unt love
Unt play me vit, unt hug unt kiss—
Unt dot's enough!

MR. SILBERBERG

Der plans unt pairposes I vear
Out in der vorld all fades away,
Unt vit der beeznis of der day
I got me den no time to spare;
Der caires of trade vas caires no more—
Dem cash accountds dey dodge me by,
Unt vit my chile I roll der floor,
Unt laugh unt gry!

Ach! frient! dem childens is der ones
Dot got some happy times—you bet!—
Dot's vy ven I been growed up yet
I visht I shtill been leedle vonce!
Unt ven dot leedle roozter tries
Dem baby-tricks I used to do,
My mout' it vater, unt my eyes
Dey vater too!

Unt all der summertime unt spring
Of childhoodt it come back to me,
So dot it vas a dream I see
Ven I yust look at anyding!
Unt ven dot leedle boy run' by,
I t'ink "Dot's *me*," fon hour to hour
Schtill chasing yet dose butterfly
Fon flower to flower!

MR. SILBERBERG

Oxpose I vas lots money vairt,
Vit blenty schtone-front schtore to rent,
Unt mor'gages at twelf-per-tcent.,
Unt diamondts in my ruffled shairt,—
I make a'signment of all dot,
Unt tairn it over vit a schmile
Aber you please—but, don'd forgot,
I keep dot chile!

SPIRITS AT HOME

THE FAMILY

THERE was Father, and Mother, and Emmy, and Jane,
And Lou, and Ellen, and John and me—
And father was killed in the war, and Lou
She died of consumption, and John did too,
And Emmy she went with the pleurisy.

THE SPIRITS

Father believed in 'em all his life—
But Mother, at first, she'd shake her head—
Till after the battle of Champion Hill,
When many a flag in the winder-sill
Had crape mixed in with the white and red!

I used to doubt 'em myself till then—
But me and Mother was satisfied
When Ellen she set, and Father came

SPIRITS AT HOME

And rapped "God Bless You!" and Mother's name,
And "The Flag's up here!" . . . And we all just
cried.

Used to come often, after that,
And talk to us—just as he used to do,
Pleasantest kind! And once, for John,
He said he was "lonesome, but wouldn't let on—
Fear Mother would worry, and Emmy and Lou."

But Lou was the bravest girl on earth—
For all she never was hale and strong,
She'd have her fun!—With her voice clean lost
She'd laugh and joke us that "when *she* crossed
To Father, *we'd* all come taggin' along!"

Died—just that way! And the raps was thick
That night, as they often since occur,
Extry loud! And when *Lou* got back
She said it was Father and her—and "*whack!*"
She tuk the table—and we knowed *her!*

John and Emmy, in five years more,
Both had went.—And it seemed like fate,—
For the old home *it* burnt down.—But Jane

SPIRITS AT HOME

And me and Ellen we built again
The new house, here, on the old estate.

And a happier family I don't know
Of *anywheres*—unless it's *them*,—
Father, with all his love for Lou,
And her there with him, and healthy, too,
And laughin', with John and little Em.

And, first we moved in the *new* house here,
They all dropped in for a long pow-wow:—
“We like your buildin', of course,” Lou said,—
“But wouldn't swop with you to save your head—
For *we* live in the ghost of the old house now!”

A HINT OF SPRING

'Twas but a hint of Spring—for still
The atmosphere was sharp and chill,
Save where the genial sunshine smote
The shoulders of my overcoat,
And o'er the snow beneath my feet
Laid spectral fences down the street.

My *shadow*, even, seemed to be
Elate with some new buoyancy,
And bowed and bobbed in my advance
With trippingest extravagance,
And, when the birds chirpt out somewhere,
It seemed to wheel with me and stare.

Above I heard a rasping stir—
And on a roof the carpenter
Was perched, and prodding rusty leaves
From out the choked and dripping eaves—

A HINT OF SPRING

And some one, hammering about,
Was taking all the windows out.

Old scraps of shingles fell before
The noisy mansion's open door;
And wrangling children raked the yard,
And laboured much, and laughed as hard,
And fired the burning trash I smelt
And sniffed again—so good I felt!

LOCKERBIE FAIR

1901

O THE Lockerbie Fair!—Have you heard of its fame
And its fabulous riches, too rare for a name!—
The gold of the noon of the June-time refined
To the Orient-Night, till the eyes and the mind
Are dazed with the sights, in the earth and the air,
Of the opulent splendours of Lockerbie Fair.

What more fortunate fate might to mortal befall,
Midst the midsummer beauty and bloom of it all,
Than to glit with the moon o'er the rapturous scene
And twink with the stars as they laughingly lean
O'er the luminous revel and glamour and glare
Fused in one dazzling glory at Lockerbie Fair.

The Night, like a queen in her purple and lace,
With her diamonded brow, and imperious grace,
As she leads her fair votaries, train upon train,

LOCKERBIE FAIR

A-dance thro' the feasts of this mystic domain
To the mandolin's twang, and the warble and blare
Of voice, flute and bugle at Lockerbie Fair.

All strange, ever-changing, enchanted delights
Found now in this newer Arabian Nights,—
Where each lovely maid is a Princess, and each
Lucky swain an Aladdin—all treasures in reach
Of the "*lamps*" and the "*rings*"—and with *Genii* to
spare,
Simply waiting your orders, at Lockerbie Fair.

A TINKLE OF BELLS

THE light of the moon on the white of the snow,
And the answering twinkles along the street,
And our sleigh flashing by, in the glamour and glow
Of the glorious nights of the long ago,
When the laugh of her lips rang clear and sweet
As the tinkle our horses shook out of the bells
And flung and tossed back
On our glittering track
In a shower of tremulous, murmuring swells
Of the echoing, airy, melodious bells!—
O the mirth of the bells!
And the worth of the bells!
Come tinkle again, in this dearth of the bells,
The laughter and love that I lack, yearning back
For the far-away sound of the bells!

Ah! the bells, they were glad in the long ago!
And the twinkles they had, they have thrilled me so
I have said: "It is they and her songs and face

A TINKLE OF BELLS

Make summer for me of the wintriest place!"

And now—but sobbings and sad farewells,

As I peer in the night through the sleeted pane,
Hearing a clangour and wrangle of bells,
And never a tinkle again!

The snow is a-swoon, and the moon dead-white,
And the frost is wild in the air to-night!

Yet still will I linger and listen and pray

Till the sound of her voice shall come this way,

With a tinkle of bells,

And the lisp-like tread

Of the hooves of the sleigh,

And the murmurs and swells

Of the vows she said.

And O, I shall listen as madmen may,

Till the tinkling bells ring down this way!—

Till again the grasp of my hand entwines

The tensioned loops of the quivering lines,

And again we ride in the wake of the pride

And the strength of the coursers, side by side;

With our faces smitten again by the spray

Of the froth of our steeds as we gallop away

In affright of the bells,

And the might of the bells,

A TINKLE OF BELLS

And the infinite glee and delight of the bells,
As they tinkle and tinkle and tinkle, till they
Are heard through a dawn where the mists are drawn,
And we canter a gallop and dash away
Sheer into The Judgment Day!

CHRISTMAS SEASON

TO A FRIEND VISITING ENGLAND

THIS is a Christmas carol—

A late one, it is true,—

But (dight in Truth's apparel)

The best that we can do:—

The best our Muse belated

Thus offers, antedated,—

E'en as the old waits waited

We, waiting, sing for you.

So, haply, you may listen,

As 'twere, with Fancy's ear,

And shape such songs of this-un

As were worth worlds to hear,—

Such anthemings ecstatic

As scaled The Mermaid's attic

In midnights aromatic

Of choicest Christmas cheer:

CHRISTMAS SEASON

Such songs as Marlowe lifted,
 With throstle-throated Will
And rare Ben, as they shifted
 Their laughing voices till
 The mirth, with music blended,
 So oversweet ascended,
 It well were never ended—
And, hark!—you hear it still! . . .

You hear it; aye, and love it!—
 Beyond all voices dear—
Your master's!—none above it.—
 So harken, and so hear!—
 Your master's English.—Surely
 No other rests so purely
 On Fame, or more securely,—
O English of Shakespeare!

AN ORDER FOR A SONG

MAKE me a song of all good things,
And fill it full of murmurings,
Of merry voices, such as we
Remember in our infancy;
But make it tender, for the sake
Of hearts that brood and tears that break,
And tune it with the harmony,
The sighs of sorrow make.

Make me a song of summer-time,
And pour such music down the rhyme
As ripples over gleaming sands
And grassy brinks of meadow-lands;
But make it very sweet and low,
For need of them that sorrow so,
Because they reap with empty hands
The dreams of long ago.

AN ORDER FOR A SONG

Make me a song of such a tone,
That when we croon it all alone,
The tears of longing as they drip,
Will break in laughter on the lip;
And make it, oh, so pure and clear
And jubilant that every ear
Shall drink its rapture sip by sip,
And Heaven lean to hear.

HER BEAUTIFUL HANDS

O YOUR hands—they are strangely fair!
Fair—for the jewels that sparkle there,—
Fair—for the witchery of the spell
That ivory keys alone can tell;
But when their delicate touches rest
Here in my own do I love them best,
As I clasp with eager, acquisitive spans
My glorious treasure of beautiful hands!

Marvelous—wonderful—beautiful hands!
They can coax roses to bloom in the strands
Of your brown tresses; and ribbons will twine,
Under mysterious touches of thine,
Into such knots as entangle the soul
And fetter the heart under such a control
As only the strength of my love understands—
My passionate love for your beautiful hands.

As I remember the first fair touch
Of those beautiful hands that I love so much,

HER BEAUTIFUL HANDS

I seem to thrill as I then was thrilled,
Kissing the glove that I found unfilled—
When I met your gaze, and the queenly bow,
As you said to me, laughingly, "Keep it now!" . . .
And dazed and alone in a dream I stand,
Kissing this ghost of your beautiful hand.

When first I loved, in the long ago,
And held your hand as I told you so—
Pressed and caressed it and gave it a kiss
And said "I could die for a hand like this!"
Little I dreamed love's fullness yet
Had to ripen when eyes were wet
And prayers were vain in their wild demands
For one warm touch of your beautiful hands.

.

Beautiful Hands!—O Beautiful Hands!
Could you reach out of the alien lands
Where you are lingering, and give me, to-night,
Only a touch—were it ever so light—
My heart were soothed, and my weary brain
Would lull itself into rest again;
For there is no solace the world commands
Like the caress of your beautiful hands.

THE BEST IS GOOD ENOUGH

I QUARREL not with Destiny,
But make the best of everything—
The best is good enough for me.

Leave Discontent alone, and she
Will shut her mouth and let *you* sing.
I quarrel not with Destiny.

I take some things, or let 'em be—
Good gold has always got the ring;
The best is good enough for me.

Since Fate insists on secrecy,
I have no arguments to bring—
I quarrel not with Destiny.

The fellow that goes "haw" for "gee"
Will find he hasn't got full swing.
The best is good enough for me.

THE BEST IS GOOD ENOUGH

One only knows our needs, and He
Does all of the distributing.
I quarrel not with Destiny:
The best is good enough for me.

TOIL

HE had toiled away for a weary while,
Through day's dull glare and night's deep gloom;
And many a long and lonesome mile
He had paced in the round of his dismal room;
He had fared on hunger—had drank of pain
As the drouthy earth might drink of rain;
And the brow he leaned in his trembling palm
Throbbled with a misery so intense
That never again did it seem that calm
Might come to him with the gracious balm
Of old-time languor and indolence.
And he said, "I will leave the tale half told,
And leave the song for the winds to sing;
And the pen—that pitiless blade of gold
That stabs my heart like a dagger-sting—
I will drive to the hilt through the inkstand's top
And spill its blood to the last black drop!"

TOIL

Then he masked his voice with a laugh, and went
Out in the world with a lawless grace—
With a brazen lie in his eyes and face
Told in a smile of glad content:
He roved the round of pleasures through,
And tasted each as it pleased him to;
He joined old songs, and the clink and din
Of the revelers at the banquet hall;
And he tripped his feet where the violin
Spun its waltz for the carnival;
He looked, bedazed, on the luring wile
And the siren-light of a woman's smile,
And peered in her eyes as a diver might
Peer in the sea ere he leaps outright,—
Caught his breath, with a glance above,
And dropped full-length in the depths of love.

.
'Tis well if ever the false lights die
On the alien coasts where our wreck'd hopes lie!
'Tis well to feel, through the blinding rain,
Our outflung hands touch earth again!
So the castaway came, safe from doom,
Back at last to his lonely room,
Filled with its treasure of work to do
And radiant with the light and bloom

TOIL

Of the summer sun and his glad soul, too!
And sweet as ever the song of birds,
Over his work he sang these words:—

“O friends are good, with their princely ways,
And royal hearts they are goodly things;
And fellowship, in the long dark days
When the drear soul cowers with drooping wings,
Is a thing to yearn for.—*Mirth* is good,—
For a ringing laugh is a rhythmic cry
Blown like a hail from the Angelhood
To the barque of the lone soul drifting by.—
Goodly, too, is the mute caress
Of woman’s hands and their tenderness—
The warm breath wet with the dews of love—
The vine-like arms, and the fruit thereof—
The touch that thrills, and the kiss that melts,—
But Toil is sweeter than all things else. . . .

HIS ROOM

“I’m home again, my dear old Room,
I’m home again, and happy, too,
As, peering through the brightening gloom,
I find myself alone with you:

TOIL

Though brief my stay, nor far away,
I missed you—missed you night and day—
As wildly yearned for you as now.—
Old Room, how are you, anyhow?

“My eas, chair, with open arms,
Awaits me just within the door;
The littered carpet’s woven charms
Have never seemed so bright before,—
The old rosettes and mignonettes
And ivy-leaves and violets,
Look up as pure and fresh of hue
As though baptized in morning-dew.

“Old Room, to me your homely walls
Fold round me like the arms of love,
And over all my being falls
A blessing pure as from above—
Even as a nestling child caressed
And lulled upon a loving breast,
With folded eyes, too glad to weep
And yet too sad for dreams or sleep.

“You’ve been so kind to me, old Room—
So patient in your tender care,

TOIL

My drooping heart in fullest bloom
Has blossomed for you unaware;
And who but you had cared to woo
A heart so dark, and heavy too,
As in the past you lifted mine
From out the shadow to the shine?

“For I was but a wayward boy
When first you gladly welcomed me
And taught me work was truer joy
Than rioting incessantly:
And thus the din that stormed within
The old guitar and violin
Has fallen in a fainter tone
And sweeter, for your sake alone.

“Though in my absence I have stood
In festal halls a favoured guest,
I missed, in this old quietude,
My worthy work and worthy rest—
By *this* I know that long ago
You loved me first, and told me so
In art’s mute eloquence of speech
The voice of praise may never reach.

TOIL

“For lips and eyes in truth’s disguise
Confuse the faces of my friends,
Till old affection’s fondest ties
I find unraveling at the ends;
But, as I turn to you, and learn
To meet my griefs with less concern,
Your love seems all I have to keep
Me smiling lest I needs must weep.

“Yet I am happy, and would fain
Forget the world and all its woes;
So set me to my tasks again,
Old Room, and lull me to repose:
And as we glide adown the tide
Of dreams, forever side by side,
I’ll hold your hands as lovers do
Their sweethearts’ and talk love to you.”

YLLADMAR

HER hair was, oh, so dense a blur
Of darkness, midnight envied her;
And stars grew dimmer in the skies
To see the glory of her eyes;
And all the summer-rain of light
That showered from the moon at night
Fell o'er her features as the gloom
Of twilight o'er a lily-bloom.

The crimson fruitage of her lips
Was ripe and lush with sweeter wine
Than burgundy or muscadine
Or vintage that the burgher sips
In some old garden on the Rhine:
And I to taste of it could well
Believe my heart a crucible
Of molten love—and I could feel

YLLADMAR

The drunken soul within me reel
And rock and stagger till it fell.

And do you wonder that I bowed
Before her splendour as a cloud
Of storm the golden-sandaled sun
Had set his conquering foot upon?
And did she will it, I could lie
In writhing rapture down and die
A death so full of precious pain
I'd waken up to die again.

IN STATE

Is it the martins or katydids?—

Early morning or late at night?

A dream, belike, kneeling down on the lids

Of a dying man's eyesight.

.

Over and over I heard the rain—

Over and over I waked to see

The blaze of the lamp as again and again

Its stare insulted me.

.

It is not the click of the clock I hear—

It is the *pulse* of the clock,—and lo!

How it throbs and throbs on the quickened ear

Of the dead man listening so!

IN STATE

I heard them whisper "*She* would not come;"

But, being dead, I knew—I knew! . . .

Some hearts they love us alive, and some

They love us dead—they do!

And *I* am dead—and I joy to be,—

For here are my folded hands, so cold,

And yet blood-warm with the roses she

Has given me to hold.

Dead—yea, dead!—But I hear the beat

Of her heart, as her warm lips touch my brow—

And O how sweet—how *blinding* sweet

To know that she loves me *now*!

THE MUTE SINGER

I

THE morning sun seemed fair as though
It were a great red rose ablow
 In lavish bloom,
With all the air for its perfume,—
 Yet he who had been wont to sing,
 Could trill no thing.

II

Supine, at noon, as he looked up
Into the vast inverted cup
 Of heavenly gold,
Brimmed with its marvels manifold,
 And his eye kindled, and his cheek—
 Song could not speak.

THE MUTE SINGER

III

Night fell forebodingly; he knew
Soon must the rain be falling, too,—
 And, home, heartsore,
A missive met him at the door—
 —Then Song lit on his lips, and he
 Sang gloriously.

DAVE FIELD

LET me write you a rune of a rhyme, Dave Field,
For the sake of the past we knew,
When we were vagrants along the road,
Yet glad as the skies were blue;
When we struck hands, as in alien lands
Old friend to old friend is revealed,
And each hears a tongue that he understands,
And a laugh that he loves, Dave Field.

Ho! let me chant you a stave, Dave Field,
Of those indolent days of ours,
With our chairs atilt at the wayside inn
Or our backs in the woodland flowers;
With your pipe alit, and the breath of it
Like a nimbus about your head,
While I sipped, like a monk, of your winey wit,
With my matins all unsaid.

DAVE FIELD

Let me drone you a dream of the world, Dave Field,
And the glory it held for us—
You with your pencil-and-canvas dreams,
And I with my pencil thus;
Yet with never a thought of the prize we sought,
Being at best but a pain,
As we looked from the heights and our blurred eyes
caught
The scenes of our youth again.

O, let me sing you a song, Dave Field,
Jolly and hale, but yet
With a quaver of pathos along the lines,
And the throb of a vain regret;—
A sigh for the dawn long dead and gone,
But a laugh for the dawn concealed,
As bravely awhile we still toil on
Toward the topmost heights, Dave Field.

EDGAR WILSON NYE

FEBRUARY 22, 1896

THE saddest silence falls when Laughter lays
Finger on lip, and falteringly breaks
The glad voice into dying minor shakes
And quavers, lorn as airs the wind-harp plays
At urge of drearest Winter's bleakest days:
A troubled hush, in which all hope forsakes
Us, and the yearning upstrained vision aches
With tears that drown e'en heaven from our gaze.
Such silence—after such glad merriment!
O prince of halest humour, wit and cheer!
Could you yet speak to us, I doubt not we
Should catch your voice, still blithely eloquent
Above all murmurings of sorrow here,
Calling your love back to us laughingly.

SONGS OF A LIFE-TIME

MRS. SARAH T. BOLTON'S POEMS

1897

SONGS of a Life-Time—with the Singer's head
A silvery glory shining midst the green
Of laurel-leaves that bind a brow serene
And godlike as was ever garlanded.—
So seems *her* glory who herein has wed
Melodious Beauty to the strong of mien
And kingly Speech—made kinglier by this queen
In lilled cadence voiced and raimented.
Songs of a Life-Time: by your own sweet stress
Of singing were ye loved of bygone years—
As through our day ye are, and shall be hence,
Till *fame divine* marks your melodiousness
And on the Singer's lips, with smiles and tears,
Seals there the kiss of love and reverence.

A MIDDAY IN MIDSUMMER

A DEEP, delicious hush in earth and sky—
A gracious lull—since, from its wakening,
The morn has been a feverish, restless thing
In which the pulse of Summer ran too high
And riotous, as though its heart went nigh
To bursting with delights past uttering:
Now, as an o'erjoyed child may cease to sing
All falteringly at play, with drowsy eye
Draining the pictures of a fairy-tale
To brim his dreams with—there comes o'er the day
A loathful silence, wherein all sounds fail
Like loitering tones of some faint roundelay . . .
No wakeful effort longer may avail—
The wand waves, and the dozer sinks away.

“FRIDAY AFTERNOON”

TO DR. WILLIAM MORRIS PIERSON

[1868-1870]

OF the wealth of facts and fancies
That our memories may recall,
The old school-day romances
Are the dearest, after all!—
When some sweet thought revises
The half-forgotten tune
That opened “Exercises”
On “Friday Afternoon.”

We seem to hear the clicking
Of the pencil and the pen,
And the solemn, ceaseless ticking
Of the timepiece ticking then;
And we note the watchful master,
As he waves the warning rod,

“ FRIDAY AFTERNOON ”

With our own heart beating faster
Than the boy's who threw the wad.

Some little hand uplifted,
And the creaking of a shoe:—
A problem left unsifted
For the teacher's hand to do:
The murmured hum of learning—
And the flutter of a book;
The smell of something burning,
And the school's inquiring look.

The bashful boy in blushes;
And the girl, with glancing eyes,
Who hides her smiles, and hushes
The laugh about to rise,—
Then, with a quick invention,
Assumes a serious face,
To meet the words, “ Attention!
Every scholar in his place!”

The opening song, page 20.—
Ah! dear old “ Golden Wreath,”
You willed your sweets in plenty;
And some who look beneath

“ FRIDAY AFTERNOON ”

The leaves of Time will linger,
And loving tears will start,
As Fancy trails her finger
O'er the index of the heart.

“ Good News from Home ”—We hear it
Welling tremulous, yet clear
And holy as the spirit
Of the song we used to hear—
“ Good news for me ”—(A throbbing
And an aching melody)—
“ Has come across the ”—(sobbing,
Yea, and salty) “ dark blue sea ! ”

Or the paen “ Scotland's burning ! ”
With its mighty surge and swell
Of chorus, still returning
To its universal yell—
Till we're almost glad to drop to
Something sad and full of pain—
And “ Skip verse three,” and stop, too,
Ere our hearts are broke again.

Then “ the big girls' ” compositions,
With their doubt, and hope, and glow

“ FRIDAY AFTERNOON ”

Of heart and face,—conditions
Of “the big boys”—even so,—
When themes of “Spring,” and “Summer”
And of “Fall,” and “Winter-time”
Droop our heads and hold us dumber
Than the sleighbell’s fancied chime.

Elocutionary Science—

(Still in changeless infancy!)—
With its “Cataline’s Defiance,”
And “The Banner of the Free”:
Or, lured from Grandma’s attic,
A ramshackle “rocker” there,
Adds a skreek of the dramatic
To the poet’s “Old Arm-Chair.”

Or the “Speech of Logan” shifts us
From the pathos, to the fire;
And Tell (with Gessler) lifts us
Many noble notches higher.—
Till a youngster, far from sunny,
With sad eyes of watery blue,
Winds up with something “funny,”
Like “Cock-a-doodle-do!”

Then a Dialogue—selected
For its realistic worth:—

“ FRIDAY AFTERNOON ”

The Cruel Boy detected

With a turtle turned to earth
Back-downward; and, in pleading,

The Good Boy—strangely gay
At such a sad proceeding—

Says, “Turn him over, pray!”

So the exercises taper

Through gradations of delight
To the reading of “The Paper,”

Which is entertaining—quite!
For it goes ahead and mentions

“If a certain Mr. O.

Has serious intentions

That he ought to tell her so.”

It also “Asks permission

To intimate to ‘John’

The dubious condition

Of the ground he’s standing on”;
And, dropping the suggestion

To “mind what he’s about,”

It stuns him with the question:

“Does his mother know he’s out?”

And among the contributions

To this “Academic Press”

“FRIDAY AFTERNOON”

Are “Versified Effusions”

By—“Our lady editress”—

Which fact is proudly stated

By the *Chief* of the concern,—

“Though the verse communicated

Bears the pen-name ‘Fanny Fern.’”

.

When all has been recited,

And the teacher’s bell is heard,

And visitors, invited,

Have dropped a kindly word,

A hush of holy feeling

Falls down upon us there,

As though the day were kneeling,

With the twilight for the prayer.

.

Midst the wealth of facts and fancies

That our memories may recall,

Thus the old school-day romances

Are the dearest, after all!—

When some sweet thought revises

The half-forgotten tune

That opened “Exercises,”

On “Friday Afternoon.”

UNLESS

WHO has not *wanted* does not guess
What plenty is.—Who has not groped
In depths of doubt and hopelessness
Has never truly hoped.—
Unless, sometimes, a shadow falls
Upon his mirth, and veils his sight,
And from the darkness drifts the light
Of love at intervals.

And that most dear of everything,
I hold, is love; and who can sit
With lightest heart and laugh and sing,
Knows not the worth of it.—
Unless, in some strange throng, perchance,
He feels how thrilling sweet it is,
One yearning look that answers his—
The troth of glance and glance.

UNLESS

Who knows not pain, knows not, alas!

What pleasure is.—Who knows not of

The bitter cup that will not pass,

Knows not the taste of love.

O souls that thirst, and hearts that fast,

And natures faint with famishing,

God lift and lead and safely bring

You to your own at last!

PROSE OR VERSE?

PROSE or Verse—or Verse or Prose?
Ever thus the query goes,—
Which delight do we prefer—
Which the finer—daintier?

Each incites a zest that grows—
Prose or Verse—or Verse or Prose?—
Each a lotus-eater's spell
Wholly irresistible.

All that wit may fashion, free-
Voiced, or piped in melody,—
Prose or Verse—or Verse or Prose—
Which of these the mastery knows?

'Twere as wise to question, friend—
As of this alluring blend,—
The aroma or the rose?—
Prose or Verse—or Verse or Prose?

CHILD'S CHRISTMAS CAROL

CHRIST used to be like you and me,
When just a lad in Galilee,—
So when we pray, on Christmas Day,
He favours first the prayers we say:
Then waste no tear, but pray with cheer,
This gladdest day of all the year:

O Brother mine of birth Divine,
Upon this natal day of Thine
Bear with our stress of happiness
Nor count our reverence the less
Because with glee and jubilee
Our hearts go singing up to Thee.

A DEFECTIVE SANTA CLAUS

To

HEWITT HANSON HOWLAND

WITH HALEST CHRISTMAS
GREETINGS AND FRATERNAL

*Little Boy! Halloo!—balloo!
Can't you hear me calling you?—
Little Boy that used to be,
Come in here and play with me.*

A DEFECTIVE SANTA CLAUS

ALLUS when our Pa he's away
Nen Uncle Sidney comes to stay
At our house here—so Ma an' me
An' Etty an' Lee-Bob won't be
Afeard ef anything at night
Might happen—like Ma says it might.
(Ef *Trip* wuz *big*, I bet you he
'Uz best watch-dog you ever see!)
An' so last winter—ist before
It's go' be Chris'mus-Day,—w'y, shore
Enough, Pa had to haf to go
To 'tend a lawsuit—"An' the snow
Ist right fer Santy Claus!" Pa said,
As he clumb in old Ayersuz' sled,
An' said he's sorry *he* can't be
With us that night—" 'Cause," he-says-ee,
"Old Santy *might* be comin' here—
This very night of all the year
I' got to be away!—so all

A DEFECTIVE SANTA CLAUS

You kids must tell him—ef he call—
He's mighty welcome, an' yer Pa
He left his love with you an' Ma
An' Uncle S' '!' An' clucked, an' leant
Back, laughin'—an' away they went!
An' Uncle wave' his hands an' yells
"Yer old horse ort to have on bells!"
But Pa yell back an' laugh an' say
"I 'spect when *Santy* come this way
It's time enough fer sleighbells nen!"
An' holler back "Good-by!" again,
An' reach out with the driver's whip
An' cut behind an' drive back Trip.

An' so all day it snowed an' snowed!
An' Lee-Bob he ist watched the road,
In his high-chair; an' Etty she
U'd play with Uncle Sid an' me—
Like she wuz he'ppin' fetch in wood
An' keepin' old fire goin' good,
Where Ma she wuz a-cookin' there
An' kitchen, too, an' ever'where!
An' Uncle say, "'At's ist the way
Yer Ma's b'en workin', night an' day,
Sence she hain't big as Etty is

A DEFECTIVE SANTA CLAUS

Er Lee-Bob in that chair o' his!"
Nen Ma she'd laugh 't what Uncle said,
An' smack an' smooove his old bald head
An' say "Clear out the way till I
Can keep that pot from b'ilin' dry!"
Nen Uncle, when she's gone back to
The kitchen, says, "We *ust* to do
Some cookin' in the *ashes*.—*Say*,
S'posin' we try some, thataway!"
An' nen he send us to tell Ma
Send two big 'taters in he saw
Pa's b'en a-keepin' 'cause they got
The premiun at the Fair! An' what
You think?—He rake a grea'-big hole
In the hot ashes, an' he roll
Them old big 'taters in the place
An' rake the coals back—an' his face
Ist swettin' so's he purt'-nigh swear
'Cause it's so hot! An' when they're there
'Bout time 'at we fergit 'em, he
Ist rake 'em out again—an' *gee*!—
He bu'st 'em with his fist wite on
A' old stove-led, while Etty's gone
To git the salt, an' butter, too—
Ist like he said she haf to do,

A DEFECTIVE SANTA CLAUS

No matter what *Ma* say! An' so
He salt an' butter 'em, an' blow
'Em cool enough fer us to eat—
An' *me-o-my!* they're hard to beat?
An' Trip 'ud ist lay there an' pant
Like he'd laugh *out loud*, but he can't.
Nen Uncle fill his pipe—an' we
'Ud he'p him light it—Sis an' me,—
But mostly little Lee-Bob, 'cause
"He's the best *Lighter* ever wuz!"
Like Uncle telled him wunst when Lee-
Bob cried an' jerked the light from me,
He wuz so mad! So Uncle pat
An' pet him. (Lee-Bob's ust to that—
'Cause he's the *little*-est, you know,
An' allus has b'en humoured so!)
Nen Uncle gits the flat-arn out,
An', while he's tellin' us all 'bout
Old Chris'mus-times when *he's* a kid,
He ist cracked hickernuts, he did,
Till they's a crockful, mighty nigh!
An' when they're all done by an' by,
He raked the red coals out again
An' telled me, "Fetch that popcorn in,
An' old three-leggud skillut—an'

A DEFECTIVE SANTA CLAUS

The *led* an' all now, little man,—
An' yer old Uncle here 'ull show
You how corn's popped, long years ago
When me an' Santy Claus wuz boys
On Pap's old place in Illinoise!—
An' your Pa, too, wuz chums, all through,
With Santy!—Wisht Pa'd be here, too!"
Nen Uncle sigh at Ma, an' she
Pat him again, an' say to me
An' Etty,—“You take warning fair!—
Don't talk too much, like Uncle there,
Ner don't fergit, like *him*, my dears,
That 'little pitchers has big ears!"
But Uncle say to her, “Clear out!—
Yer brother knows what he's about.—
You git your Chris'mus-cookin' done
Er these pore childern won't have none!"
Nen Trip wake' up an' raise', an' nen
Turn roun' an' nen lay down again.
An' one time Uncle Sidney say,—
“When dogs is sleepin' thataway,
Like Trip, an' *whimpers*, it's a sign
He'll ketch *eight* rabbits—mayby *nine*—
Afore his fleas'll wake him—nen
He'll bite hisse'f to sleep again

A DEFECTIVE SANTA CLAUS

An' *try* to dream he's go' ketch *ten*."
An' when Ma's gone again back in
The kitchen, Uncle scratch his chin
An' say, "When Santy Claus an' Pa
An' me wuz little boys—an' Ma,
When she's 'bout big as Etty there;—
W'y,—'When we're *growed*—no matter *where*,
Santy he cross' his heart an' say,—
'I'll come to see you, all, some day
When *you*' got childerns—all but me
An' pore old Sid!'" Nen Uncle he
Ist kindo' shade his eyes an' pour'
'Bout forty-'leven bushels more
O' popcorn out the skillut there
In Ma's new basket on the chair.
An' nen he telled us—an' talk' low,
"So Ma can't hear," he say:—"You know
Yer *Pa* know', when he drived away,
To-morry's go' be Chris'mus-*Day*;—
Well, nen *to-night*," he whisper, "see?—
It's go' be Chris'mus-*Eve*," says-ee,
"An', like yer Pa hint, when he went,
Old Santy Claus (now hush!) he's sent
Yer Pa a postul-card, an' write
He's shorely go' be here to-night. . . .

A DEFECTIVE SANTA CLAUS

That's why yer Pa's so bored to be
Away to-night, when Santy he
Is go' be here, sleighbells an' all,
To make you kids a Chris'mus-call!"
An' we're so glad to know *fer shore*
He's comin', I roll on the floor—
An' here come Trip a-waller'n' roun'
An' purt'-nigh knock the clo'eshorse down!—
An' Etty grab Lee-Bob an' prance
All roun' the room like it's a dance—
Till Ma she come an' march us nen
To dinner, where we're *still* again,
But *tickled* so we ist can't eat
But pie, an' ist the hot mincemeat
With raisins in.—But *Uncle* et,
An' *Ma*. An' there they set an' set
Till purt'-nigh supper-time; nen we
Tell him he's got to fix the Tree
'Fore *Santy* gits here, like he said.
We go nen to the old woodshed—
All bundled up, through the deep snow—
"An' snowin' yet, *jee-rooshy-O!*"
Uncle he said, an' he'p us wade
Back where's the Chris'mus-Tree he's made
Out of a little jackoak-top

A DEFECTIVE SANTA CLAUS

He git down at the sawmill-shop—
An' Trip 'ud run ahead, you know,
An' 'tend-like he 'uz *eatin'* snow—
When we all waddle back with it;
An' Uncle set it up—an' git
It wite in front the fireplace—'cause
He says "'Tain't so 'at Santy Claus
Comes down *all* chimblies,—least, to-night
He's comin' in *this* house all right—
By the front-door, as ort to be!—
We'll all be hid where we can *see*!"
Nen he look up, an' he see Ma
An' say, "It's ist too bad their *Pa*
Can't be here, so's to see the fun
The childern *will* have, ever' one!"

Well, *we*!—We hardly couldn't wait
Till it wuz dusk, an' dark an' late
Enough to light the lamp!—An' Lee-
Bob light a candle on the Tree—
"Ist *one*—'cause I'm 'The Lighter'!"—Nen
He clumb on Uncle's knee again
An' hug us *bofe*;—an' Etty git
Her little chist an' set on it
Wite clos't, while Uncle telled some more

A DEFECTIVE SANTA CLAUS

'Bout Santy Claus, an' clo'es he wore
"All maked o' furs, an' trimmed as white
As cotton is, er snow at night!"
An' nen, all sudden-like, he say,—
"Hush! Listen there! Hain't that a sleigh
An' sleighbells jinglin'?" Trip go "whooh!"
Like he hear bells an' smell 'em, too.
Nen we all listen. . . . An'-sir, shore
Enough, we hear bells—more an' more
A-jinglin' clos'ter—clos'ter still
Down the old crook-road roun' the hill.
An' Uncle he jumps up, an' all
The chairs he jerks back by the wall
An' th'ows a' overcoat an' pair
O' winder-curtains over there
An' says, "*Hide quick, er you're too late!—
Them bells is stoppin' at the gate!—
Git back o' them-'air chairs an' hide,
'Cause I hear Santy's voice outside!*"
An' Bang! bang! bang! we heerd the door—
Nen it flew open, an' the floor
Blowed full o' snow—that's *first* we saw,
Till little Lee-Bob shriek' at Ma
"*There's Santy Claus!—I know him by
His big white mufftash!*"—an' ist cry

A DEFECTIVE SANTA CLAUS

An' laugh an' *squeal* an' dance an' *yell*—
Till, when he quiet down a spell,
Old Santy bow an' th'ow a kiss
To him—an' one to me an' Sis—
An' nen go *clos't* to Ma an' stoop
An' kiss her—An' nen give a whoop
That *fainted* her!—'Cause when he bent
An' kiss' her, he ist backed an' went
Wite 'ginst the Chris'mus-Tree ist where
The candle's at Lee-Bob lit there!—
An' set his white-fur belt afire—
An' blaze streaked roun' his waist an' higher
Wite up his old white beard an' th'oat!—
Nen Uncle grabs th' old overcoat
An' flops it over Santy's head,
An' swing the door wide back an' said,
"Come out, old man!—an' *quick* about
It!—I've ist *got* to put you out!"
An' out he sprawled him in the snow—
"Now *roll!*" he says—"Hi-roll-ee-O!"—
An' Santy, sputter'n' "*Ouch! Gee-whiz!*"
Ist roll an' roll fer all they is!
An' Trip he's out there, too,—I know,
'Cause I could hear him yappin' so—
An' I heerd Santy, wunst er twic't,

A DEFECTIVE SANTA CLAUS

Say, as he's rollin', "*Drat the fice't!*"
Nen Uncle come back in, an' shake
Ma up, an' say, "Fer mercy-sake!—
He hain't hurt none!" An' nen he said,—
"You youngsters h'ist up-stairs to bed!—
Here! kiss yer Ma 'Good-night,' an' me,—
We'll he'p old Santy fix the Tree—
An' all yer whistles, horns an' drums
I'll he'p you toot when morning comes!"

.
It's long while 'fore we go to sleep,—
'Cause down-stairs, all-time somepin' keep
A-kindo' scufflin' roun' the floors—
An' openin' doors, an' *shettin'* doors—
An' could hear Trip a-whinin', too,
Like he don't know ist *what* to do—
An' tongs a-clankin' down *k'thump!*—
Nen some one squonkin' the old pump—
An' *Wooh!* how cold it soun' out there!—
I could ist *see* the pump-spout where
It's got ice chin-whiskers all wet
An' drippy—An' I see it yet!
An' nen, seem-like, I hear some mens
A-talkin' out there by the fence,
An' one says, "Oh, 'bout twelve o'clock!"

A DEFECTIVE SANTA CLAUS

“Nen,” ’nother’n says, “Here’s to you, Doc!—
God bless us ever’ one!” An’ nen
I heerd the old pump squonk again.
An’ nen I say my prayer all through
Like Uncle Sidney learn’ me to,—
“O Father mine, e’en as Thine own,
This child looks up to Thee alone:
Asleep or waking, give him still
His Elder Brother’s wish and will.”
An’ that’s the last I know . . . Till Ma
She’s callin’ us—an’ so is *Pa*,—
He holler “*Chris’mus-gif!*” an’ say,—
“I’m got back home fer Chris’mus-Day!—
An’ Uncle Sid’s here, too—an’ he
Is nibblin’ ’roun’ yer Chris’mus-Tree!”
Nen *Uncle* holler, “I suppose
Yer Pa’s so proud he’s froze his nose
He wants to turn it up at us,
’Cause *Santy* kick’ up such a fuss—
Tetchin’ hisse’f off same as ef
He wuz his own fireworks hisse’f!”

An’ when we’re down-stairs,—shore enough,
Pa’s nose *is* froze, an’ salve an’ stuff
All on it—an’ one hand’s froze, too,

A DEFECTIVE SANTA CLAUS

An' got a old yarn red-and-blue
Mitt on it—"An' he's froze some more
Acrost his chist, an' kindo' sore
All roun' his *dy*-fram," Uncle say.—
"But Pa he'd ort a-seen the way
Santy bear up last night when that-
Air fire break out, an' quicker'n *scat*
He's all a-blazin', an' them-'air
Gun-cotton whiskers that he wear
Ist *flashin'*!—till I burn a hole
In the snow with him, an' he roll
The front-yard dry as Chris'mus jokes
Old parents plays on little folks!
But, long's a smell o' tow er wool,
I kep' him rollin' *beautiful*!—
Till I wuz *shore* I *shorely* see
He's *squenched*! W'y, hadn't b'en fer *me*,
That old man might a-burnt clear down
Clean—plum'—level with the groun'!"
Nen Ma say, "*There*, Sid; that'll do!—
Breakfast is ready—*Chris'mus*, too.—
Your voice 'ud soun' best, sayin' *Grace*—
Say it." An' Uncle bow' his face
An' say so long a *Blessing* nen,
Trip bark' *two* times 'fore it's "A-men!"

THE BOYS OF THE OLD GLEE CLUB

TO NEWTON BOOTH TARKINGTON

THE BOYS OF THE OLD GLEE CLUB

YOU-FOLKS rickollect, I know—
'Tain't so *very* long ago—
Th' Old Glee Club—was got up here
'Bout first term Grant tuk the Cheer
Fer President four year—and then
Riz—and tuk the thing again!
Politics was runnin' high,
And the *Soldiers* mighty nigh
Swep' the Country—'bout on par
With their rickord through the War.
Glee Club, mainly, Soldiers, too—
Most the Boys had wore the blue,—
So their singin' had the swing—
Kindo'-sorto' Shiloh-ring,
Don't you know, 'at kindo' got
Clean *inside* a man and shot
Telegrams o' joy dee-vine
Up and down his mortal spine!

THE BOYS OF THE OLD GLEE CLUB

They was jest *boys* then, all young—
And 'bout lively as they sung!
Now they hain't young anymore—
('Less the ones 'at's gone before
'S got their youth back, glad and free
'N' keerless as they used to be!)
Burgess Brown's old friends all 'low
He is 'most as lively now,
And as full o' music, too,
As when Old Glee Club was new!
And *John Blake*, you mind, 'at had
The near-sightedness so bad,
When he sung by note, the rest
Read 'em fer him, er he *guessed*
How they run—and *sung* 'em, too,
Clair and sweet as honey-dew!
Harry Adams 's here—and he's
Jollyin' ever' man he sees
'At complains o' gittin' gray
Er a-*agein'* anyway.
Harry he jest *thrives* on fun—
"Troubles?" he says,— "Nary one!—
Got gran'-childern I can play
And keep young with, night and day!"
Then there's *Ozzy Weaver*—he's

THE BOYS OF THE OLD GLEE CLUB

Kickin', lively as you please,—
'N' *Dearie Macy*.—Called 'em then
"The Cherubs." Sung "We are two Men
O' th' Olden Time." Well! their duets
Was jest sweet as violets!
And *Dan Ransdell*—he's still here—
Not jest in the *town*, but near
Enough, you bet, to allus come
Prompt' on time to vote at home!
Dan he's be'n in Washington
Sence he went with Harrison. . . .
And *John Slauson*—(Boys called John
"Sloppy Weather.")—he went on
Once to Washington; and Dan
Intertained him:—Ever' man,
From the President, to all
Other big-guns Dan could haul
In posish 'ud have to shake
Hands with John fer old times' sake.
And to hear *John*, when he got
Home again, w'y, you'd a-caught
His own sperit and dry fun
And mis-*chieve*-y-ousness 'at run
Through his talk of all he see:—
"Ruther pokey there, fer *me*,"

THE BOYS OF THE OLD GLEE CLUB

John says,—“though, of course, I met
Mostly jest the *Cabinet*
Members; and the President
He'd drop round: and then we went
Incogg fer a quiet walk—
Er sometimes jest set and talk
'Bout old times back here—and how
All *you*-boys was doin' now,
And Old Glee Club songs; and then
He'd say, 'f he *could*, once again,
Jest hear *us*—‘*once more*,’ says he,—
‘I'd shed Washington, D. C.,
And jest fall in ranks with you
And march home, a-singin', too!’”
And *Bob Geiger*—*Now* lives down
At Atlanty,—but this town
'S got Bob's *heart*—a permanent
And time-honoured resident.
Then there's *Mahlon Butler*—still
Lookin' like he allus will!
“How you feelin'?” s'I, last time
I see Mahlon: 'N' *he* says, “I'm
‘*Feelin'*?’” says, “so peert and gay
'F I's *hitched up* I'd run away!”
He says, “Course I'm *bald* a bit,

THE BOYS OF THE OLD GLEE CLUB

But not 'nough to *brag* on it
Like *Dave Wallace* does," he says,
"With his *two* shamefacetedness!"
(Dave jest laughs and lifts his "dice"
At the joke, and blushes—twice.)
And *Ed. Thompson*, he's gone on—
They's a whole quartette 'at's gone—
Yes, a whole quartette, and *more*,
Has crossed on the Other Shore. . . .
Sabold and *Doc Wood'ard's* gone—
'N' *Ward*; and—last,—*Will Tarkington*.—
Ward 'at made an Irish bull
Actchully jest beautiful!—
"Big-nose Ben," says Ward, "I s'pose,
Makes an eyesore of his nose!"
And *Will Tarkington*—Ef he
Ever had an *inemy*,
The Good Bein's plans has be'n
Tampered with!—because all men,
Women and childern—ever' one—
Loved to love Will Tarkington!

The last time I heerd 'em *all*
Was at Tomilsonian Hall,
As I rickollect—and *know*,—

THE BOYS OF THE OLD GLEE CLUB

Must be'n fifteen year' ago!—
Big Mass Meetin'—*thousands* here. . . .
Old Dick Thompson in the Cheer
On the stage—and three er four
Other "Silver-Tongues" er more! . . .
Mind Ben Harrison?—Clean, rich,
Ringin' voice—" 'bout concert-pitch,"
Tarkington *he* called it, and
Said its music 'clipsed the band
And Glee Club both rolled in one!—
('Course you all knowed *Harrison!*)
Yes, and Old Flag, streamin' clean
From the high arch 'bove the scene
And each side the Speaker's stand.—
And a *Brass*, and *Sheepskin* Band,
('Twixt the speeches 'at was made)
'At cut loose and banged and played—
S'pose, to have the *noise* all through
So's th' crowd could listen to
Some *real* music!—Then Th' Old Glee
Club marched out to victory!—
And sich singin'!—Boys was jest
At their very level-best! . . .
My! to *hear* 'em!—From old "Red-
White-and-Blue," to "Uncle Ned"!—

THE BOYS OF THE OLD GLEE CLUB

From "The Sword of Bunker Hill,"
To "Billy Magee-Magaw"!—And—still
The more they sung, the more, you know,
The crowd jest *wouldn't* let 'em go!—
Till they reached the final notch
O' glory with old "Larboard Watch!"
Well! *that* song's a song my soul
Jest swings off in, past control!—
Allus did and allus will
Lift me clair of earthly ill
And interrogance and doubt
O' what the good Lord's workin' out
Anyway er anyhow! . . .
Shet my eyes and hear it *now*!—
Till, at night, that ship and sea
And wet waves jest wallers me
Into that same sad yet glad
Certainty *the Sailor* had
When waked to his watch and ward
By th' lone whisper of the Lord—
Heerd high 'bove the hoarsest roar
O' any storm on sea er shore!

Time's be'n clockin' on, you know!
Sabold, who was first to go,

THE BOYS OF THE OLD GLEE CLUB

Died back East, in ninety-three,
At his old home, Albany:
Ward was next to leave us—Died
New York. . . . How we've laughed and cried
Both together at them two
Friends and comrades tried and true!—
Ner they wasn't, when they died,
Parted long—'most side-by-side
They went singin', you might say,
Till their voices died away
Kindo' into a duet
O' silence they're rehearsin' yet.

Old Glee Club's be'n meetin' less
And less frequenter, I guess,
Sence so many's had to go—
And the rest all miss 'em so!
Still they's calls they' got to make,
Fer old reputation's sake,
So to speak; but, 'course, they all
Can't jest answer *ever*' call—
'Ceptin' Christmas-times, er when
Charity calls on 'em then;
And—not *chargin'* anything—
W'y, the Boys 's jest *got* to sing! . . .

THE BOYS OF THE OLD GLEE CLUB

Campaign work, and jubilees
To wake up the primaries;
Loyal Legions—G. A. R.'s—
Big Reunions—Stripes-and-Stars
Fer School-houses ever'where—
And Church-doin's, here and there—
And Me-morial Meetin's, when
Our War-Gov'ner lives again!
Yes, and Decoration Days—
Martial music—prayers and praise
Fer the Boys 'at marched away
So's *we'd* have a place to stay! . . .
Little childern, 'mongst the flowers,
Learnin' 'bout this Land of Ours,
And the price these Soldiers paid,
Gethered in their last parade. . . .
O that sweetest, saddest sound!—
“Tenting on the old Campground.” . . .
The Old Glee Club—singin' so
Quaverin'-like and soft and low,
Ever' listener in the crowd
Sings in *whispers*—but, *out 'loud*,
Sings as ef he didn't keer—
Not fer *nothin'!* . . . Ketch me here
Whilse I'm honest, and I'll say

THE BOYS OF THE OLD GLEE CLUB

God's way is the only way! . . .
So I' allus felt, i jing!
Ever' time the Boys 'ud sing
'Bout "A Thousand Years, my Own
Columbia!"—er "The Joys we've Known"—
"Hear dem Bells"—er "Hi-lo, Hail!"—
I have felt God must prevail—
Jest like ever' boy 'at's gone
Of 'em all, whilse he was on
Deck here with us, seemed to be
Livin', laughin' proof, to *me*,
Of Eternal Life—No more
Will than *them all*, gone before! . . .
Can't I—many-a-time—jest see
Them *all*, like they *used* to be!—
Tarkington, fer instance, clean
Outside o' the man you *seen*,
Singin'—till not only you
Heerd his voice but *felt* it, too,
In back of the bench you set
In—And 'most can feel it yet!
Yes, and Will's the last o' five
Now that's dead—yet still *alive*,
True as Holy Writ's own word
Has be'n spoke and man has heerd!

THE BOYS OF THE OLD GLEE CLUB

Them was left when Will went on
Has met once sence he was gone—
Met jest once—but not to sing
Ner to practice anything.—
Facts is, they jest didn't know
Why they *was* a-meetin' so;—
But *John Brush* he had it done
And invited ever' one
Of 'em he could find, to call
At his office, "Music Hall,"
Four o'clock—one Saturd'y
Afternoon.—And this was three
Er four weeks, mind, sence the day
We had laid poor Will away.
Mahlon Butler he come past
My shop, and I dropped my last
And went with him, wonder'n', too,
What new *joke* Brush had in view;—
But, when all got there, and one-
By-one was give' a seat, and none
O' Brush's *twinkles* seemed in sight,
'N' he looked *biz* all right, all right,—
We saw—when he'd locked the door—
What *some* of us, years before,
Had seen, and long sence fergot—

THE BOYS OF THE OLD GLEE CLUB

(*Seen but not heard, like as not.*)—
How Brush, once when Admiral Brown
'S back here in his old home-town
And flags ever'wheres—and Old
Glee Club tellin' George to "Hold
The Fort!" and "We" would "make 'em flee
By land and sea," etcetery,—
How Brush had got the Boys to sing
A song in that-there very thing
Was on the table there to-day—
Some kind o' 'phone, you know.—But *say!*
When John touched it off, and we
Heerd it singin'—No-sir-ee!—
Not the machine a-singin'—No,—
Th' Old Glee Club o' long ago! . . .
There was *Sabold's* voice again—
'N' *Ward's*;—and, sweet as summer-rain,
With glad boy-laughture's trills and runs,
Ed. Thompson's voice and *Tarkington's!* . . .
And *ah*, to *hear* them, through the storm
Of joy that swayed each listener's form—
Seeming to call, with hail and cheer,
From Heaven's high seas down to us here:—
"But who can speak the joy he feels
While o'er the foam his vessel reels,

THE BOYS OF THE OLD GLEE CLUB

*And his tired eyelids slumbering fall,
He rouses at the welcome call
Of 'Larboard Watch, Ahoy!'"*

. And *O*
To *hear* them—same as long ago—
The listeners whispered, still as death,
With trembling lips and broken breath,
As with one voice—and eyes all wet,—
“God!—God!—*Thank God, they're singing yet!*”

ENVOY

BE our fortunes as they may,
Touched with loss or sorrow,
Saddest eyes that weep to-day
May be glad to-morrow.

Yesterday the rain was here,
And the winds were blowing—
Sky and earth and atmosphere
Brimmed and overflowing.

But to-day the sun is out,
And the drear November
We were then so vexed about
Now we scarce remember.

Yesterday you lost a friend—
Bless your heart and love it!—
For you scarce could comprehend
All the aching of it;—

ENVOY

But I sing to you and say:
Let the lost friend sorrow—
Here's another come to-day,
Others may to-morrow.



